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PRAGUE CONFERENCE OF WORLD YOUTH (WYU), FEBRUARY 1953

7 February 1953--During the opening session of a 4-day conference of the Council of the WFDY (World Federation of Democratic Youth) on 5 February 1953 in the auditorium of the Parliament [building] in Prague, the general secretary of the WFDY, Jacques Denis, reported on the progress made by the "Democratic youth movement" and noted that the WFDY and its organizations in different countries had demonstrated their capability of organizing important actions in behalf of peace and the demands of youth. In this connection, Denis pointed to the action of Belgian youth groups against the extension of the draft term, the fight for the release of [Communist] prisoners in France, and actions against colonialism in Algeria and the reilitarization of West Germany.

To prove his contention of growing influence of the WFDY with youth, he made the following claim as to membership: at its inception in 1945, the WFDY had 30 million members in 61 countries; increased to 60 million in 70 countries at the time of the Second Congress, and now has 75 million members in 87 countries. Denis claimed that these figures are "without precedent in the history of youth movements" and then continued:

"Confronted with such an effort of democratic youth, it is our great task to make the conquest of the young generation complete."

"Therefore, we have to study the results of our work and to determine the tasks and immediate prospects of the youth movement."

"For that reason, the Executive Committee of the WFDY has proposed today [5 February 1953] to hold the Third World Youth Congress on 20 - 30 July 1953 in Bucharest under the motto: 'Youth united! Forward toward an enduring peace, toward democracy, toward the independence of nations, and a better future!'"

In conclusion, Denis recommended that the Conference immediately proceed with its preparatory work for the planned congress in Bucharest at which about 1,000 delegates and 500 guests and observers are expected.

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A total of 66 countries were represented at the Prague conference by 66 delegates, among them Eddy Pourcelet of the Jeunesse Populaire de Belgique. The president of the WFDY, Enrico Berlinguer, was prevented from attending due to interference of the Italian government.

9 February 1953 -- At the Prague conference the Council of the WFDY decided to hold the Fourth World Youth Festival in Bucharest on 5 - 18 August 1953.

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